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INDIAN TRUTH

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Founded December 15, 1882, by Herbert Welsh, Henry S. Pancoast, and others, in the residence of Hon. John Welsh, Philadelphia. *Sixty-six years' active non-partisan work for Indian civilization and citizenship*

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POWERFUL ACQUISITIVE FORCES CONTINUE TO JEOPARDIZE ALASKAN NATIVE LAND RIGHTS

Since whaling days the Alaskan natives have been the victims of the white man's greed. In spite of repeated pronouncements of Congress that native land rights based on occupancy and use would be respected, very little has been done to definitely define such rights, and the white man has gone on exploiting Alaskan resources.

The Act of May 1, 1936, authorized the Secretary of the Interior to set aside reservations for Alaskan natives of lands previously reserved for their occupancy or use or of lands now occupied by them. Under this authority Secretary Ickes had studies made to determine boundaries, but the work of establishing reservations was not completed before he resigned. Although orders setting up reservations have been on Secretary Krug's desk for many months no action has been taken to put them into effect.

Last December the Indian Rights Association wrote Secretary Krug urging that he proceed on the authority he already possesses to set up reservations. In reply on March 31 he talked of the difficulties of determining native land claims by "administrative agreement among the interested Government departments and agencies concerned in the management of the lands in Alaska." (Scant consideration of settlement on the basis of rights of the natives.)

Secretary Krug then stated that a bill along the lines of H.R. 7002—80th Congress—to set up machinery for the solution of Alaskan native land titles was under preparation for presentation to Congress. H.R. 7002 was a vicious Bill proposing to extinguish native land titles without their consent, without provision for negotiation and with no adequate compensation short of long-drawn-out and expensive court action.

At its meeting on May 4 the Board of Directors of the Indian Rights Association took a firm position in support of the land rights of Alaskan natives. The gist of its position is as follows:

1. "The Indian Rights Association is opposed to any attempt to extinguish the land titles of Alaskan natives without their consent and without provision for adequate compensation without the necessity for litigation. . . .

2. "The Indian Rights Association sees no reason why the Secretary of the Interior should not proceed on the basis of studies already made to either set aside reservations as already recommended or to conduct further negotiations or hearings leading possibly to further modification of the recommendations.

"As Assistant Secretary Warne testified last year in the hearings on S.J. Res. 162, 80th Congress (p. 47):

"Congress has already, by the Act of May 1, 1936, given the Department of the Interior power to convey to native groups a formal title to land, restricted only as to alienation. We are satisfied that we can make such a grant or confirmation of title conditional upon the execution of a release of all other possessory claims by the native group and its members. . . . In those cases where we can reach a reasonable agreement, we would confirm title to some part of the lands now subject to native claims in exchange for a release of the remainder. In this way, I believe that we can free large areas from the cloud of native possessory claims. . . . If this committee has no objection, we propose to make that attempt and to see how far we get."

"Mr. Krug adopted this statement as his own (page 563) and added (pages 590-591):

" . . . It would be easily possible under the procedure established by Congress in 1936 to establish reser-

ervations, and I am sure negotiate a settlement with the Indians for any other claims they might have, if Congress chooses to use that basis for clearing this matter up; so you would only have a trading of a reservation as against the rights they now claim they have, and *that was the general mechanism that was contemplated at the time Congress passed the Act of 1936.* . . . I come to this committee saying that this is the way to do it: Sit down with these Indians, negotiate regarding these claims and get it settled and cleared up in the next year or two and get it over with. . . . Under the present law I have that power.' (Italics ours.)

3. "This paragraph of the Indian Rights Association statement deals with the need of Alaskan natives for reservations to protect their fishing interests. For most of the Indians of southeast Alaska fishing has been the principal source of livelihood since time immemorial. In the face of the invasion of powerful fishing interests of the continental United States the protection of these rights of the natives is absolutely essential to a decent living for them.

4. "This paragraph deals with threats to ignore rights of natives to mineral resources under land that might be set aside for them. It is the position of the Association that Alaskan natives should be protected in these rights the same as all other citizens."



Advisory Committee Adopts Indian Rights Statement

The Department of the Interior Advisory Committee on Indian Affairs, meeting in Washington May

5 and 6, adopted verbatim the statement of position of the Indian Rights Association on the Alaska situation summarized above.



“Harold L. Ickes: On Frisking the Alaska Indians”

Under this heading, the former Secretary of the Interior, in *The New Republic* of May 9, charges Secretary Krug with deliberately attempting to steal Alaskan natives’ land titles from them under a pretense of legality.

Krug and the National Forest Service are blamed by Ickes for the passage by the 80th Congress of The Tongass Act* “which President Truman unfortunately signed, no doubt inadvertently, which gave the Forest Service bureaucrats power to turn over the Tongass Forest to certain private pulp interests.” Because of the probable unconstitutionality of this Act, even the pulp interests, he says, seem to be afraid to act under its authority.

Mr. Ickes sums up the situation admirably when he says, “Those who demand justice for that territory (Alaska) agree with Secretary Krug’s declaration that the solution to the land title disputes in Alaska is within his discretion. He should make use immediately of the procedures available to him and protect the natives’ rights by the creation of reservations. . . .”

* The Tongass Act, approved August 8, 1947, Public Law No. 385, 80th Congress. The Indian Rights Association opposed this measure at every turn and urged President Truman to veto it.

In speaking of another group of Indians, President Truman has written:

“The United States, which would live on Christian principles with all of the people of the world, cannot omit a fair deal for its own Indian citizens.”

Are robbery and double dealing to continue to be the Indians’ “Fair Deal”? Do our “Christian principles” begin to operate only after the Indian has nothing further of value for the white man to covet?



Friend of the Eskimo

The death of Clarence L. Andrews ends a vigorous career of championship of the good of Alaskan natives and especially the Eskimos. In association with Thomas W. Lopp and others he helped to introduce reindeer among Alaskan Eskimos. From a few thousand deer imported from Siberia around the end of the 19th century, native herds were built up into the hundreds of thousands by 1925 and had become very really a way of life for the Eskimo, following the destruction of their whaling industry.

Mr. Andrews saw and resisted with zeal and intelligence the invasion into the reindeer industry by white interests in their attempt to make it commercially profitable. Although the commercial enterprise was a complete failure, natives were mercilessly exploited in the efforts of the corporation to make profits and the project was dealt a crippling blow. About the same time the winter range (reindeer moss) within

reasonable proximity of the villages became seriously depleted. This, combined with increasing availability of wage work at good pay and the general disorganization due to white interference led to neglect of herding by natives and growing depredation by wolves. These factors have led to the decline, and it may be the ultimate destruction, of this industry which gave so much help to the Eskimos in a serious livelihood crisis.

Mr. Andrews' "Story of Alaska," 1938, is one of the best histories of Alaska. He is the author also of "The Story of Sitka," 1922, "The Eskimo and his Reindeer in Alaska," 1939, and other books and articles dealing with Alaska.



Legislation Imperative to Avert Navajo Disaster

Legislation has again been introduced in both Houses of Congress to set up a ten-year program of rehabilitation for the Navajo and Hopi Indians. (The identical Bills are S. 1407 introduced by Senator Joseph C. O'Mahoney, Chairman of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, and H.R. 3476 by Representative Toby Morris, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Indian Affairs of the Public Lands Committee.)

Jonathan M. Steere, President of the Indian Rights Association, testifying in support of this legislation at hearings on the House Bill said in part:

"The plight of the Navajo and Hopi Indians is well substantiated and generally admitted. The people

of the United States are thoroughly aroused over the situation that has resulted from our national neglect to carry out solemn treaty promises made more than 80 years ago to these Indians. The people of the country now look to the Congress to make restitution to the Navajo and Hopi to the fullest degree that is possible.

"The problem is one of an illiterate and sick people stranded on a semi-desert area. Sixty-four thousand Indians are attempting to eke out an existence on a reservation that will not support decently more than about half their number."

This legislation would authorize an expenditure of ninety million dollars over a ten-year period to extend health and educational services, to develop timber, agricultural and mineral resources, technical skills and industrial enterprises aimed to re-establish the economic self-sufficiency of the Navajo and Hopi Indians.

To prevent a continuing load of dependency and the pauperization of this splendid group of Indians and to insure their future welfare, a far-reaching program of rehabilitation must be speedily worked out and promptly put into action. The financial cost will be great, but not so great as the cost of supporting thousands of sick and destitute Indians for years to come. This program must make up so far as possible within ten years for the neglect of the past 80 years.

As we go to press (May 17) these Bills are still in committee. We urge

you to write the two committee chairmen named above, and also your own Senators and Representatives asking them to support this legislation.



Hoover Commission Report on Indian Affairs

"The difficulties that face the Federal Government in guiding the affairs of the American Indians have been emphasized by recent crises. For example: the Navajo nation . . . is in severe financial straits that have caused widespread malnutrition and starvation. This has occurred at a time when the United States as a whole is enjoying prosperity and virtually full employment.

"Many other Indian groups, among the estimated 400,000 in the United States face similarly severe conditions. Their standard of living is low and there is a serious problem in maintaining their health. Educating them properly has proved extremely difficult."

In this terse language the present-day Indian Affairs problem is stated by the Hoover Commission.

The Commission makes nine recommendations. The first "Advocates progressive measures to integrate the Indians into the rest of the population as the best solution of 'the Indian problem. . . .' This policy should be the keystone of the organization and of the activities of the Federal Government in the field of Indian affairs."

The dissents of members of the Commission point up effectively the

weakness or impropriety of the recommendations. Concerning this one, Commissioner Forrestal declares that "this Commission established as it was to examine into the organization of the executive branch of the government lacks both the competence and the authority to make this *basic policy decision*." Vice-Chairman Dean Acheson and Commissioner James H. Rowe, Jr., also dissent from the plunge of the Commission into the field of policy making which they say belongs to the legislative branch of the government. Acheson sums up pointedly the policy outlined by the Commission: "We are," he says, "to integrate the Indian, remove 'surplus' Indians from Indian lands, put the lands into private, individual or corporate ownership, remove tax exemption, and, as soon as possible, merge the Indian, his life and lands with those of the people of the state where he resides, subject entirely to state jurisdiction." Such an invasion of the policy making field he maintains is not justified, either on the basis of abolishing functions of the executive branch or on the ground that common sense would oppose drawing too fine a line between policy and administration.

Comprehensive planning of programs to carry out this policy would be done by all agencies concerned with Indian affairs, "including state and local governments." (The Indian Rights Association would join the National Congress of American Indians in asking, "*Why are the Indians left out of this planning?*")

The recommendation that "Young, employable Indians and the better cultured families are to be assisted to leave the reservations and set themselves up on land or in business," sounds too much like *forced assimilation!* It would seem far preferable to assure adequate education and economic opportunities for all Indians and leave them to choose their pattern for living. Leadership on the reservations or in the Indian communities will be essential to the success of the corporations or cooperatives proposed for handling Indian land and other assets.

Perhaps the very brevity with which the recommendations of the Commission are given makes them seem more arbitrary and less founded on an understanding of the basic problems than was actually the case.

The report of the Task Force* which made the study of Indian affairs for the Commission shows much more understanding. As it states:

"It will not take genius to develop sound programs area by area. . . . The thing that has been most lacking and most needed is Indian motivation. For 150 years policies have been imposed by the government. The policies have been Indian policies, not Indians' policies. . . . It will not be easy to arouse Indian initiative and enterprise, but there is evidence that it can be done if the

Indian people are drawn into the program building process themselves. They are realistic, more so than a good many of their non-Indian friends. . . . The Indian people of the reservations can be drawn into program building, and if they are drawn in they will have something to contribute. The biggest gain, however, will be their emotional commitment to the program and the increasing revival of hope, initiative and drive."

The Task Force found the effort under the Indian Reorganization Act to establish self-government among the Indians to be encouraging.

"Indian leadership is developing. Indian people are analyzing their problems and assessing their conditions in a realistic way that is very promising."

Three administrative recommendations are:

1. That a superintendent who is inadequate or inefficient be disciplined; that each superintendency have a range of at least two grades to allow promotion at any given post and that the Washington office use more personnel with field experience.

2. That the Commissioner of Indian Affairs be a professional, permanent administrator appointed by the politically responsible department head to whom the Indian Service is attached.

3. The transfer of the Bureau of Indian Affairs to the proposed department of welfare. More than 50% of the appropriations for the Indian Bureau over the last twenty years has been for welfare aspects of the Indian problem. A new welfare de-

* A Mimeographed report of 325 pages. The Task Force was George A. Graham, Professor of Political Science, Princeton University, Chairman; Charles J. Rhoads, Former Commissioner of Indian Affairs; John R. Nichols, President, New Mexico Agricultural and Mechanical College; and Gilbert Darlington, Treasurer, American Bible Society.

partment would be equipped to handle such activities. It will also be the federal agency having direct contact with state welfare and education officials.

Although the location of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the Interior Department has facilitated integration of Indian land programs with general resource development, the Commission believes that this location has not "yielded a proportionate return on the government's investment in the Indians as a people. . . . Cooperative action between Interior, Agriculture and the new department can be mapped out when area programs . . . are approved by the Congress."



Appropriations for Indian Service

The First Deficiency Appropriation Bill as it passed Congress on May 16 carried \$1,000,000 for the Navajo and Hopi Service. This was less than passed by the Senate, but \$640,000 more than contained in the House Bill. This increase was vitally important particularly to enable the Navajo schools to complete the full year.

The regular Interior Department Appropriation Bill, for the fiscal year 1950, as it passed the House provides \$52,127,971. This is nearly \$7,000,000 below the amount requested by President Truman's Budget, but an increase of \$7,817,657 above the current 1949 appropriation.

Funds for education are increased \$1,000,000 to \$12,200,000 and for health by \$400,000 to \$7,731,000.

In the light of the excellent record made by Indians in the repayment of loans and the valuable assistance this has been to them, the cut from \$2,400,000 requested by the Budget to \$500,000 seems most unfortunate.

Adequate appropriations for health, education, and economic development are absolutely essential to the progress of the Indian people.



New School for Navajos

Public Law No. 20 approved on March 17 transfers the former Bushnell Army Hospital at Brigham City, Utah, to the Department of the Interior for use as an Indian Boarding School, largely for Navajos. When necessary alterations are completed the school will care for 2,000 children. It is hoped to have it ready for 1,200 this coming autumn.

It will be possible also to care for about 36 Navajo families in training for off-reservation employment both along vocational lines and to prepare them for the general social adjustment required of them. These groups will vary with seasonable employment so that ultimately a considerable number of adult Navajos will benefit from this training.

There are good employment opportunities in this section of Utah.



Fort Berthold Indians Must Move

Three hundred of the three hundred and fifty family groups of the Arikara, Gros Ventre and Mandan tribes of the Fort Berthold Reservation, North Dakota, will have to move as a result of the construction

of the Garrison Dam on the Missouri River (see INDIAN TRUTH, May-August, 1948). Legislation authorizing compensation to which these tribes have agreed has been introduced in Congress (S.J.Res. 11 and H.J.Res. 33).

As the Association recently wrote Hon. J. Hardin Peterson, Chairman, House Committee on Public Lands, and Sen. Joseph C. O'Mahoney, Chairman, Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs:

"These Indians face the destruction of their social and economic life in which they had become well established on a satisfactory basis. Their new situation will place them in a precarious state requiring long years of readjustment. We are of the opinion that money cannot adequately compensate them. Certainly we as a nation should make a generous settlement with this group, and we should give every possible assistance to them in re-establishing themselves on a self-sustaining basis."

It is of vital importance that this legislation be promptly enacted.

Commissioner Appointed

Dr. John R. Nichols, President of the New Mexico Agricultural and Mechanical College, took office as Commissioner of Indian Affairs about the middle of April.

Dr. Nichols served on the Indian Affairs Committee of the Hoover Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of Government.

Born in New York City he graduated from Oregon State Agricultural College in 1922. He has advanced degrees in Education and Education Administration from Stanford Uni-

versity and in International Administration from Columbia.

From 1945 to 1947 he was adviser on educational reorganization to General MacArthur in Tokyo.

Governor Mabry's Pocket Veto Saves Vote for New Mexico's Indians

Indians of New Mexico may still vote because of prompt action by their friends. The State Legislature in March, 1949, passed a Bill which would have disfranchised reservation Indians in that state.

The Indian Rights Association and many others both within the state and outside urged the Governor to veto the Bill. The Governor did not sign the Bill.

Books

The Navajo and *The Children of the People*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., by Clyde Kluckhohn, Ph.D. of Yale, and Dorothea Leighton, M.D., are separate studies of the Navajo people that supplement each other. The authors are eminently qualified for the work they have done. The books give invaluable help for understanding the Navajos.

ARCTIC MOOD, the April selection of the Family Reading Club, by Mrs. Eva Alvey Richards (Caxton Printers, Caldwell, Idaho, 1949), is as delightful as it is vivid and authentic. In unique style with a whimsical touch of irresistible appeal Mrs. Richards shares her day-by-day association as a government school teacher among the Eskimos of the Arctic village of Wainwright, Alaska. By her graphic, intimate glimpses of their life she makes these far-away people very real folks. Her appreciation of their admirable traits is genuine and convincing.

A. R. L.